

GERALD GLAUBITZ  
USS *SAN FRANCISCO*, SURVIVOR

#262

INTERVIEWED ON  
DECEMBER 6, 1998  
BY JEFF PAPPAS

TRANSCRIBED BY:  
CARA KIMURA  
NOVEMBER 11, 1999

(Conversation off-mike.)

**Jeff Pappas (JP):** The following oral history interview was conducted by Jeff Pappas for the National Park Service, USS *Arizona* Memorial at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 6, 1998 at three p.m. The person being interviewed is Gerald Glaubitz, who was on board the USS *San Francisco* on December 7, 1941. Jerry, for the record, can you please state your full name, place of birth and the date?

**Gerald Glaubitz (GG):** Gerald August Glaubitz, born in Murdock, Nebraska, November 23, 1920.

JP: Tell me a little bit about your hometown. Did you stay in your hometown?

GG: No, did not. I was born in the house that my grandfather built in 1893 and moved out of there shortly thereafter, but spent my time in another little town called Alvo, Nebraska, which is about fifteen miles from Murdock, Nebraska.

JP: Can you repeat the name of that town?

GG: Alvo, A-L-V-O.

JP: Okay.

GG: Very unusual. It was on the Rock Island Railroad and it was a train stop, named after the daughter of the guy who was the first stationmaster around there.

JP: Interesting. So did you spend your elementary school years there and your high school years?

GG: Elementary school and high school.

JP: Had you finished high school at...

GG: Yes sir.

JP: So after high school, did you immediately join the service, or was that some time in between?

GG: Well, I went up to Omaha and I had an uncle there who was in the National Guard and of course, that was the time during the depression and also the droughts and work was very hard to find. And prior to getting out of high school, I went up there in Omaha and took an exam for the navy. And at that time, they were taking about one in every hundred applicants. So I figure my application was probably slim to none.

JP: Now, what year is this, 1935, '36?

GG: Nineteen thirty-eight.

JP: Nineteen thirty-eight.

GG: Nineteen thirty-eight. I graduated in May and this was around just probably a month or two prior to that.

JP: So you had been thinking about a navy career perhaps...

GG: Oh yes.

JP: ...before enlisting.

GG: Yes.

JP: What was your attraction to the U.S. Navy?

GG: Well, again, my uncle, he said, "You don't want to be in the army or that," he said he recommended - and he was an

army man – he recommended that I join the navy. And I thought that was a good idea.

JP: Had you had any experience? You were landlocked there in Minnesota. Any experience with water before?

GG: Maryland, I mean, Nebraska. Not Minnesota, Nebraska.

JP: Right.

GG: Yeah, no, none whatsoever.

JP: So here comes the navy, here comes the big oceans.

GG: That's right. Here comes the farm boy from Nebraska going into the navy.

JP: So 1938, obviously your application had been accepted.

GG: Yes. I was, immediately after graduating high school, I and two other graduates – he had a – one of 'em had a girlfriend in Pocatello, Idaho. I'm sorry, Spirit Lake, Idaho. And we took off going there and we didn't have any money so we started hopping freight trains and we rode freight trains all the way to the West Coast and up to Idaho. And we got there we found out that the harvest was over, which we were used to, being farm boys, and we got a job there with the Panhandle Lumber Company, taking and trimming the trees and taking the trimmings and putting.... It was strictly a company town. They had the houses. They built the road. They furnished the electricity and heat. And they had these big furnaces that they did this chopped up all this trimmings and fired the furnaces. And one of the jobs was putting this thing – we called it the hog. It just ground this all up into chips, took a conveyor belt and put it in the furnaces to generate electricity and heat.

JP: Oh, interesting.

GG: Oh yeah.

JP: So before – now, this was during, between high school and the navy?

GG: Yes.

JP: Okay.

GG: I got a call from my mother and she says that you are to report for your final examination in September the eighth. And I had no transportation back, so I hooked a fruit express out of Yakima, Washington and rode a train. And I couldn't get inside of that day they had the cars, you know, where they put ice in each end and the fruit and stuff in the middle, and you couldn't get in. So I got up on the catwalk, put my hand underneath the catwalk went to sleep and rode back to Omaha, Nebraska.

JP: Well, having been such a competitive position, one out of every one hundred applicants had been accepted...

GG: Right.

JP: ...tell me what you felt when you received that acceptance letter.

GG: Well, it wasn't acceptance letter until I passed the final exam. When I got there in Omaha and then they finally said, "Okay, you're one of the inductees."

JP: Oh, you had to pass a written exam?

GG: Oh yes. I had to pass a written first and then a final physical.

JP: Tell me about that written exam. Do you remember?

GG: Yes, it was nothing. I always did very well in school, so it was a piece of cake for me.

JP: So you had passed your written and now you're in the U.S. Navy. You're en route to the West Coast.

GG: No, Great Lakes.

JP: Mm-hm. You trained in the Great Lakes.

GG: That's right.

JP: Tell me about that. Where in the Great Lakes?

GG: Well, that's the naval training center in Great Lakes, Illinois and it's one of the oldest in the country. And in fact, it's the only one now still in use. All the rest of 'em have been closed and that's the only one in use. And it was really the wrong time of year. It was nice when I got up there in September but when I got done training in December, we had to stand guard on that breakwater out there and it was the coldest darned thing coming off of that (chuckling) lake you ever saw in your life. And they put you out there guarding it, a breakwater or a pier, with a gun with no bullets. (Chuckles)

JP: At that time, had you been thinking about a specific job in the navy? Had you been...

GG: No, I had not thinking about it, but I had been taking a number of tests and evidently I came out pretty well because when I was sent to the USS *San Francisco*, and they shipped a whole number of us out. We had a big trainload left Great Lakes went immediately south all the way to Texas and then

over to the West Coast and ended up in Long Beach, California, and went aboard the *San Francisco*. Many others went aboard different ships out of there. I think there was about thirty or forty carloads of sailors going to the navy.

JP: Nineteen thirty-eight.

GG: Nineteen thirty-eight.

JP: So when...

GG: Got aboard ship and evidently with my test, they figured I was pretty well educated and I was put in the fire control division, which controls the gunfire of the ships.

JP: So there's your later interest in fire departments?

GG: Right. Well, no, this is not fire department. This is the gunfire.

JP: Right.

GG: This is control where the shells go. And that was an entirely different thing. Of course, ended up with my career with the naval research lab and radar missile guidance later on.

JP: So after basic, then you went off to the West Coast and ended up in Long Beach.

GG: That's right.

JP: And that's when you got on the *San Francisco*.

GG: That's right.

JP: Okay. And at that point, it's early 1939?

GG: No, still '38.

JP: Still '38.

GG: Prior to Christmas, I went aboard.

JP: (Inaudible) on the *San Francisco*.

GG: Yeah.

JP: When did you sail off to Pearl, Hawaii?

GG: Well, we left there, we went up to San Francisco, to the Golden Gate Exposition. Left there, went to the East Coast, through the Panama Canal. Went to Norfolk and then went to New York City and 1939 was one of the ships on display at New York City's the World's Fair.

JP: Very interesting. Tell me about that experience.

GG: Well, it was a lot of people came aboard to see the ship, believe me. And it was real nice and of course I got to see the fair. The first World's Fair I'd ever seen in my life. Very, very impressed, being a farm boy again from Nebraska. We didn't stay very long there and we left there and we joined and was a flag ship with Admiral [*Husband E.*] Kimmel - by the way, was the flag - and made a goodwill cruise around South America with three cruisers, the *San Francisco*, the *Tuscaloosa*, and the - trying to think of the third one now. Wasn't the *New Orleans*. Anyway, there was three cruisers, all identical. We made a complete cruise. We stopped at every country on the East Coast and around to the Straits of Magellan and up the West Coast, stopped at every country up there, back through the canal the same way and back up to Norfolk. Left there, went to Bar Harbor, Maine. Had my first introduction to lobster and I got hooked on it immediately. People there treated us fantastic. Left there,



went through the canal again and went to Washington, to the navy yard, Bremerton, Washington, for overhaul. And this again now was now 1940 and got overhaul there and immediately went to Pearl Harbor.

JP: Let's go back to 1939...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...when you're in the East Coast, New York, during the World's Fair that coincided with the battle of the Northern Atlantic was heating up.

GG: Yes it was. Yes.

JP: How close were you guys, the *San Francisco*, to that, as far as hearing rumors about what was happening with the...

GG: Well, we were very close because we were out there of course and we were in peace time, so we're running with all the lights and everything on at night. And we're out there and we come across a couple of British ships that were out there and of course, they were at war with Germany, so they were all blacked out and everything. And this one officer, the day I happened to be on the bridge, one officer of the day said something about, "Well, I'm going to illuminate these people and see what's going on."

And the skipper said, "You do and you get us shot all to hell." He says, "You ain't going to do anything." He says, "Them people are at war."

JP: Now, you're at port at this time in New York?

GG: No, we was out, out there.

JP: You were out.

GG: It was out in the ocean, out near Cuba, at that time, heading for South America.

JP: How interested were you in learning more about the war in Europe at that time?

GG: Quite a bit, because it was – and this was right before the one pocket battleship was caught, down off of the coast there and trapped by the British and went out and they scuttled it there. Yes, we got very interested. I did get very interested in it. And of course, just to get ahead on my mindset, later on when we were in Pearl and everybody's talking about the things heating up, about war and everything, and I'm sitting out there and I said, "We're going to miss everything, 'cause it's going to be out there in the Atlantic and we're sitting over here in the Pacific. Ain't nothing going to happen. We're going to miss out on everything."

Well, believe me, that changed! Yeah, that changed.

JP: So you came back up to Bremerton for an overhaul.

GG: Right.

JP: And from Bremerton, you headed on to Pearl.

GG: Pearl. We were one of the first ships. We joined what was then called the Pineapple Fleet. There was no battleships there or nothing.

JP: This is pretty early, though.

GG: Yes.

JP: But Japan had been active in the South Pacific in 1939.

GG: Yes.

JP: Negotiations had been...

GG: Right.

JP: ...continuing in Washington D.C. throughout...

GG: Right.

JP: ...and tell me about the feelings of the crew at the time about a potential battle with Japan, or potential war.

GG: Again, I, and I think everybody else thought that we were not going to be involved. I think we thought at that time that Japan would not dare attack us and that it was going to be a battle between the Axis powers – Italy and Germany and them – and England and us. And we're going to miss it all.

JP: So it seemed rather peculiar that you're sailing off to Pearl Harbor.

GG: Right.

JP: Was that part of the plan?

GG: Yes, it seemed peculiar to me that they brought all them battleships to Pearl Harbor.

JP: That's right. The American fleet had been...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...switched from its Pacific...

GG: Right.

JP: ...the West Coast too...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...in 1940.

GG: Right.

JP: Were you part of that exodus from California to Hawaii?

GG: No, we were already there. They came out. We were already there. And when they came out, we started all these exercises where we'd go out on Monday and the battleships would go out and we'd be in one line and they'd be in another line, and we'd be ranging on them - and I was a range finder operator on turret three. And we'd go down there and this was the first introduction of the first radar on the USS *Pennsylvania* out there. And by the way, that was built by a naval research lab and I eventually ended up working there, so I got quite a history later on. But anyway, we're out there and I'm out there ranging, you know, and I get my ranges up and they'd say, "Well, congratulations. Your range is exactly the same as the radar."

I said, "No, you congratulate them. I know I'm right."  
(Chuckles) Little ego. (Chuckles).

JP: So tell me, what was the time of the year that you headed off to Pearl from Bremerton?

GG: Nineteen thirty-nine. Let me see. No, it was the first part of 1940.

JP: Okay.

GG: I think it was in February.

JP: So in February of 1940, you're heading off to Pearl.

GG: Right.

JP: At that time, was still...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...almost two years.

GG: Yeah, nothing. Nothing then at that point other than what was going on in the Atlantic.

JP: Well then describe to me the military, the general military operations of Pearl Harbor at that time, as far as numbers of ships, activity.

GG: Well, at that time, when we were first there, it wasn't much. And as soon as the battleships arrived, for some reason or another, and of course, I was not privy to why. As soon as the battleships arrived, everything went up, on the drills and on all the simulations and everything you did, preparing for war. And as I say, we'd go out on Monday, we'd be out there and practice all week long and then Friday we'd come in and we'd be in on the weekend except we were in there again for overhaul.

JP: So there's a heightened preparedness, then...

GG: Oh yes, very much so.

JP: ...even as early as 1940?

GG: The army was on drill. The Army Air Corps and the navy was on drill. As a matter of fact, the night prior to December 7, I was over there and I had two aunts that lived

over there, old maid aunts that were nurses for the – one was Hickam Field and the other was American Red Cross. And they had a little cottage and I'd go over there with them. And the fact that I had relatives there, I was allowed overnight liberty. And we had a real fine time and they were good cooks and everything, so it was real nice, but again the tension was going up. And you could see all the preparation was going up. And that night before, we went over. I had bought an automobile, from an officer over there, a 1934 Grand Page, so I had a car. And we went out and we picked up a couple of gals and we was going to go up to Diamond Head. Well, we couldn't get up to Diamond Head 'cause the army had it closed off. They were having maneuvers.

JP: What was your rank by this time?

GG: I was a Fire Controlman Third Class.

JP: Okay. So this is mid-1940, let's say.

GG: Yeah.

JP: Okay. We're still sixteen months away, or more so.

GG: Well, this night I'm telling you about, was the night before, was December 6.

JP: Well, why don't we go right there.

GG: Okay.

JP: If there's nothing that you feel that's important to you between, let's say, mid-1940 through December of 1941, there's anything that comes to you or strikes you, we can go right to the attack.

GG: All right.

JP: Okay. Couple of hours before, try to recreate for me what was going on, on the *San Francisco*. What were you doing? What was the ship doing?

GG: Well, I was actually, was not there. We were over on the beach. You see we were over there, the two of us, another fire controlman and I. We picked a couple of gals up. We had liberty and we went and took a hotel and had weekend liberty. This was Saturday, so we had Saturday and Sunday liberty, planning on coming back on Sunday night. And we were there and we went to the hotel and the next morning, all of a sudden, they woke us up and said, "Pearl Harbor is under attack. All servicemen report back to your stations."

"Ah, it's a drill," you know, "let's go get a movie or something."

Well, about that time, there was a couple of explosions which I thought were bombs at the time, and several other people, but it turned out later that actually what they were was five-inch shells they were shooting at the Japanese that went over and were landing in downtown Honolulu, and was not bombed. Honolulu was not bombed by the Japanese that day.

JP: Right.

GG: But those explosions were from the gunfire of the navy, shooting at the Japanese. And we immediately jumped in the car, he and I, in civilian clothes, heading back to Pearl. It's only a short drive, six miles. Well, at that time, it was a two-lane road. And we started back and there's a lot of other people that had the same idea, 'cause all these servicemen going back. There was taxicabs and cars, and the thing was jammed. The army was going toward Honolulu on the other side of the road, so traffic was stopped. I looked over to my

right and there's a sugar cane field and there's no fence and I just wheeled out in the sugar cane to start back. And as I did, the closer I got to Pearl, of course, we could see the explosions going on and everything and a lot of people I knew, shipmates, and I picked 'em up and I had this car. It had running boards, a 1934 Grand Page, and this is a big car. And the time I hit the gates at Pearl, that thing was loaded. And it was really amazing because usually when you come back off of liberty, those Marines at that gate were so strict it was not funny. And I did not have insurance on the car, so I'd have to park the car outside the gate. We come in there that morning, all of us with our ID's and those Marines at the gate just waved us right on through. Didn't check anybody's ID or anything. And we rode just right on through and of course you don't see Pearl until you almost get there. We could see all the smoke going up and all the explosions, but when we come up over that hump, hit the gate, look out and see that ships burning and the planes bombing and going on, unbelievable. I mean, it just did not comprehend in my mind what the heck was happening.

JP: Now, fourteen months building up to Pearl...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...there was this heightened anxiety about a potential conflict...

GG: Right.

JP: ...with Japan. Yet when it happened...

GG: Yeah.

JP: ...it still was incomprehensible.



GG: Nobody thought and everybody thought where did they come from? How'd they get here? I said the same thing.

Well, we were really disadvantaged, 'cause we ran to the ship. Here we are, in there again, for an overhaul. We had no ammunition on board. We had no fuel onboard. All our fire control computers and range keepers and everything was over to the instrument shop being repaired and checked over, and we had nothing. We couldn't even – the only thing that they had, a couple of the guys went down and got a Browning automatic rifle and a couple others, a forty-five and shot at the Japanese. We all went to the – the *New Orleans* was a sister ship and she was right next to us. We all went over there and tried to get, but they had more people that needed it.

JP: Well, how many people were on the *San Francisco* at the time?

GG: I think the crew at that time was about around seven or eight hundred. Later on, it turned out to be more than a thousand. But at that time, we were not completely full of what we did.

JP: So there's no sense in going back to the *San Francisco*?

GG: Well, we went on there and immediately, again, as soon as the waves subsided and all the attack stopped, went back over to the ship, back over to '*Frisco* and immediately what we was trying to do — and actually during the attack, there were two 1.1 guns that were supposed to go on the fantail, were sitting on the dock. And the yard workman got the crane going, got those two guns on and borrowed ammunition from the *New Orleans* and had them guns firing before the attack was over. Unbelievable. Of course, they didn't bolt 'em all down. They bolted a couple of bolts down and said, "Shoot!" (Laughs)

JP: And what did you do specifically on the *New Orleans*?

GG: I got in line and handed some five-inch shells to the people who were shooting.

JP: And that was your job.

GG: That was it. Yup.

JP: And so you stuck on the, stayed on the *New Orleans*?

GG: Well, until the attack was over, which was about, I guess about noon we decided there probably was, there was no more attack. We stayed around there, you know, everybody was ready 'cause after the thing, finally the second wave left, there was no more...

(Taping interrupted. Resumes)

JP: So you'd recognized that these were Japanese planes?

GG: Correct.

JP: And they were so close.

GG: We could see the red ball on the wing by this time and like the first people that were attacked, they came up with the same thing, "What the heck is this?" And then they saw the red ball and immediately recognized it because we had been going through drills of what we sighted enemy planes. It was Japanese with the red ball and Germans with the swastika on the wing and so forth and so on.

JP: So you had been trained to recognize...

GG: Yes.

JP: ...certain symbols on these planes.

GG: That's correct. Yeah.

JP: Had you, when you were on the *New Orleans*, had you periodically, did you periodically look back at the *San Francisco*...

GG: Oh yes. Oh yeah. We looked back and see what was going on. As I say again, these planes were coming over so close it just felt like you could almost reach up and touch 'em. And yet, when the thing and they were shooting at them and I don't think we hit 'em once, maybe. I don't think we really did.

JP: Well, brief me on the *New Orleans*, the firing capacity of the *New Orleans*. How capable was the *New Orleans*?

GG: Well, same as our ship. We had eight five-inch twenty-five guns and they at that time had some machine guns. But none of us at that time had the twenty-millimeters or anything like this. At one point, the ones we were getting were going to be the first automatic weapons type we were putting on the ship.

JP: So now we're through the first wave, into the second wave.

GG: Second wave.

JP: You stayed on the *New Orleans*?

GG: Yes.

JP: Okay, explain to me what happened during the second wave.

GG: Well, essentially there was very little difference in time between the first wave and the second wave. It was almost as if they were one. You know, it was just a slight lull when the second wave hit. They were very well coordinated with what they did and very slight lull. It was almost, to us, it seemed like one attack. I found out later it was actually two waves.

JP: Right.

GG: I didn't know at the time it was two waves.

JP: Well, there must have been so much confusion...

GG: Yes.

JP: ...going on at the time.

GG: Very much confusion. So as soon as things calmed down, there was no more, everybody ceased firing; no more attacks. Then of course, I went back over to the ship and immediately, being a ranked fire controlman, we started getting our stuff back. We then went over to the instrument shop and got our gear and brought it back to put onboard, so that we could get prepared to get underway. And it took us several days to get that onboard and they got the ship, got the ammunition loaded, got the fuel put on and cut short our yard stay. And we then took off with, I think it was three or four other cruisers or some destroyers and two troopships to Wake Islands, to relieve them. When we left that harbor, we couldn't shoot a gun.

JP: This was still (inaudible) you left the harbor on USS, on the *San Francisco*?

GG: *San Francisco*. We could not fire our gun because none of our – we did not have everything hooked up. We couldn't have fired a gun.

JP: So you basically, you sailed to Wake Island...

GG: Yes.

JP: ...without having firing capacity?

GG: We sailed to Wake Island and we worked night and day and time we hit close to Wake Island, we had everything ready to fire.

JP: Interesting. Now, rather than spend too much more time immediately after Pearl Harbor and what you did, why don't we briefly go into your career, your naval career...

GG: Right.

JP: ...we do want to talk about, as we mentioned, so talk about some of your civic activities directly related to the Pearl Harbor Survivor organization. So why don't you briefly explain to me your career?

GG: Okay.

JP: And then we'll go on after that.

GG: I stayed on the *San Francisco* for forget how many more months. We had been involved in a major night battle on the December 13, 1942, where [*Rear*] Admiral [*Daniel J.*] Callaghan and [*Rear*] Admiral [*Norman*] Scott was killed. We took on two Japanese battleships at night, less than 2,000 yards away and damaged one enough to sink and damaged the other enough so that they sunk it the next day by airplanes. And sent back to States. The ship was built at

Mare Island and we had lost every – the day, on the twelfth, a twin engine Betty had hit the after superstructure, knocking out the after control, killing a number of people there and putting out our main battery and our anti-aircraft battery directors back there. And also this then meant that all the control was shifted up to the forward superstructure. And at the night battle, everybody was up there and the Japanese, when the Japanese battleships were shooting at us, they evidently aimed at that and killed every officer down to junior lieutenant commander on there that was ended up in charge of the ship without any. And we joined in, dropped in behind the *Helena* and signaled them with a flashlight up front and a flashlight – and steering had to go without after control, which below decks, all the telephones were out so it was all by voice and just following the *Helena* out that night.

And then we went back to *San Francisco* and they had a complete new superstructure ready to put on when we got there. 'Cause they had all the plans of the ship, they built it originally. And they just cut the old one off and put a new one on.

JP: So you stayed with the *San Francisco* throughout your naval career during World War II?

GG: No. No, I left there, got married in December of '42 and not quite a year later, I was transferred back to Washington D.C. at the advanced fire control school. It was the first class. And was then assigned to USS *Missouri*, pre-commissioning and put the USS *Missouri* in commission in 1944 when Harry Truman made the commissioning speech. And left there and went to shakedown and then was transferred to naval research lab in Washington D.C. to set up new computers and things and new instruments for fire control and teach the first crews that were going out on them, and writing the lesson plan for teaching. And ended up there at

the end of the war as a chief. Was rated Chief and transferred there, Chief Fire Controlman. And at the end of the war then in 1945, I was Chief and was offered a job there as an engineer in the equipment research branch of the radio division, which turned out to be the radar division and my career was missile guidance and radar.

JP: And you stayed with that until you retired?

GG: I stayed that and I retired in 1974. I had the pleasure of working on the first guidance system - excuse me - for an American missile, which was the Lark. Also helped build the guidance system and flew co-pilot on the first automatic landing system for the navy, for airplanes.

JP: Now, not only is your military career...

GG: Right.

JP: ...interesting and very vast and full, but your civic career as well, too, back in your town of Morningside, apparently which became your adopted home.

GG: That became my adopted home. Looking for a place to live, we were living in an apartment and had one child, expecting another. Needed more room and they had a little community out there being built. And went out there and the house, the price was \$6,939 with no down payment since I was a GI.

JP: What year was this?

GG: This was 1947.

JP: Where is Morningside, in relation to...

GG: Morningside is just southeast of Washington D.C., right outside the main gate of Andrews Air Force Base.

JP: So you bought a home?

GG: Yes.

JP: Start raising a family.

GG: Started raising a family.

JP: Well, when did you become mayor of Morningside?

GG: Well, I first became involved in the fire department since I had been in Nebraska when I was seventeen, I joined the volunteer fire department there prior to going off to the navy. And then, came back there and I saw the fire department there, so I joined that immediately in 1947. And then I didn't become mayor until 1961. And been mayor ever since 1961. Also with volunteer fireman, I was the fire chief for eleven years and president for a number of years and held every office including now the chaplain. Have been the chaplain for quite a few years.

JP: So now you're the current mayor of Morningside?

GG: I'm current mayor of Morningside.

JP: Tell me a little about your relationship to the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, the fact that you've been the national president between 1990, 1992.

GG: Well, when I first got out there, I heard about the fact on radio one morning, that there was a Pearl Harbor Survivors Association in Virginia and this gentlemen was looking for members and I called him up. And he says, "Well, you're not



in Virginia,” and he says – my mailing address was Washington D.C.

And so then they called me up and said, “Well, we’re trying to get somebody to,” – I went to one of their chapter meetings and thought it was great. And they said, “We’re trying to get somebody to be the state chairman of Washington D.C.”

And I said, “I don’t live in Washington D.C., I live in Maryland.”

“Oh. We have a Maryland chapter.”

So I joined that, became president of that.

JP: When was this, what year?

GG: Ooh. What year was I president? In the early seventies. No, I’m sorry, it was before that. Yeah, no, it was in the seventies. Yeah, ’71, I went to my first national Pearl Harbor Survivors convention in Honolulu. That I remember. (Chuckles)

JP: Okay.

GG: And it was after that that I became president of the one there and then I became the head of the resolutions and by-laws committee and became national parliamentarian and then ran for vice president and was president in 1990, ’91, and ’92.

JP: Okay.

GG: And that of course was the fiftieth anniversary in 1991, which again, every five years we go back to Pearl. And this was the fiftieth anniversary and I had a very interesting

thing. We had been closely involved, of course, on the prior one, on the forty-fifth, and we had very, very poor cooperation from the military with the Pearl Harbor Survivors. So when I became president I said I'm going to change this and Lee Goldfarb was my vice president so we got our heads together and we went to Washington D.C. and made an appointment with Secretary of Defense, Mr. Cheney. And...

JP: Richard Cheney.

GG: Richard Cheney. We went to his office. By the way, he's a fellow Nebraskan, born in Nebraska also.

JP: He is.

GG: And was a Congressman from Wyoming. And went to his office and told him that we were coming up on the fiftieth anniversary. We would like to coordinate everything through his office.

JP: I think we're going to have to stop there for a second.

END OF TAPE #7

BEGINNING OF TAPE #8

JP: Okay, we stopped, you had been elected national president of the...

GG: Yeah and I was elected national president and I was getting ahead of myself a little bit because I was elected national president in Virginia Beach in December 7, of course, of 1990. And I immediately got back, I had a call from the White House - and this was about two days after I got home - that the President would like to have me down to interview

at the White House for a meeting. So I said, "I'm only ten minutes away," I jumped in my car...

JP: Of course, the President at this time is...

GG: George Bush. And of course, we go on down there and he had a lot of military, all the heads of the military organizations in. And just great, we had made a meeting - I'm sorry. We had set up a meeting with him and went on down and figured we'd be in and out in about ten minutes or so. Well, when he found out that we were Pearl Harbor survivors and the *San Francisco* was escort at his carrier out there for a while, we were there for over an hour. (Laughs) Now, I don't know who else was waiting, but they had to wait.

Then I say we went to the Secretary of Defense to set up the thing for the fiftieth and I told him, when I got in there, I walked in his office, said, "Mr. Secretary, I'm going to rat on you."

He says, "Why is that?"

I said, "You've got a desk and an office bigger than the President."

And he did have. (Chuckles) He said, "Okay."

So we went through what we wanted and everything and he said, "Well, is there anything else you want?"

And I said, "Yes, Mr. Secretary, I got one other request. I understand that the *Missouri* is about to go out of commission again."

He said, "That's correct."

I said, "Is this true, she'd been put out before and brought back."

And he said, "Yes, it is."

And I says, "Well, I put her in commission in 1945." I says, "Is there any chance she could be brought to Pearl Harbor?"

He said, "I'll bring it to Pearl Harbor for you."

And it was there. The President and I went aboard it and had a nice interview on the *Missouri* that day. And then of course, I don't know if you're familiar with the movie "*Under Siege*". That was made on the USS *Missouri* on her way back from Pearl.

JP: So this meeting you had with President Bush on the *Missouri*, that was at the fiftieth anniversary?

GG: Mm-hm.

JP: Okay.

GG: Yeah.

JP: Tell me about that. You had escorted...

GG: Yes.

JP: ...Mr. and Mrs. Bush that day.

GG: Yes, I had been contacted with the White House and we had made a lot of arrangements. And they said, "We're going to meet you out here."

And I went out there and I forget the date exactly now but anyway, went out there and met him at the memorial and

they said this is what's going to happen and this is what's going to happen. They had a barrier up there with armor and so forth. And they said, "Now, if shots come from this way, you go this way. If shots come from that way, you go..."

I said, "Wait a minute. Now, hold it." (Laughs) "Are you serious?"

They said, "Yes, we are." And then they said, "We just want to make sure that you know what you're supposed to do if something happens."

It turned out that morning there was so much...

JP: This was told to you by the Secret Service?

GG: Yes. So many people there that they had people within four feet of the President, front and back. And this one guy was up there and they were trying to put everybody, scope everybody with this metal detector. This guy said, "I ain't worried about these guys. I give up," and just run us all in by the busloads.

This is 4:30 in the morning and that place was packed. If you've ever seen video of it or not, it was packed.

JP: And this was on the USS *Missouri*?

GG: No, this was on the Punchbowl, at 4:30 in the morning. We left there in the President's motorcade and went down to the dock. Got on the dock, got on the admiral's barge and started out to the *Arizona* Memorial. Went through the - and when we went out, there was ships lined up both sides and there was just the President and Barbara and one person from his staff, or Secret Service, and the crew and my wife and I on the barge. And he says, he jumped up on the back, "Come on Jerry, join me up here," he says.

And we got up on the back of the barge and Barbara joined us and she said (inaudible). We're standing there and we're waving with them. The next day in the paper, the double spread is this picture.

JP: This is the local Honolulu paper?

GG: Yeah. Of us waving to all these people lined up. I said, "I want that picture." Well, I eventually got it. But I had to get it from the White House, 'cause they took it.

Anyway, we went from there to the *Arizona* Memorial where he gave another speech. Left there, went to Pier 63, made another speech. Left there and went to the *Missouri*. And that's (chuckles) we had a busy morning.

JP: So you spent the entire day with President Bush.

GG: Right. Yes.

JP: Have you stayed in touch with him over the years?

GG: Oh yes. I have. As a matter of fact, I got this very nice letter from him after I got back and got these pictures and I've been looking for 'em and I was trying to find that picture. Here it was, in this thing he sent me was this picture. So I have a picture. I hadn't bought the newspapers, but I wanted a picture. I have the picture now.

And then it was coming up on my wife's and my fiftieth anniversary so we made a request for a fiftieth anniversary thing and he personally sent us a letter. And then he personally sent me another letter before he went out of office.

JP: Excellent.

GG: And he's just so down-to-earth, you would not believe it.  
And she is too. Really is.

JP: You had started your family...

GG: Yes.

JP: ...in 1947.

GG: Well, no, prior to that. Forty-seven was my - actually we had one son that was born in 1943 and he died. And then my daughter was born in 1945 and my son was born in 1947 in August.

JP: You have any grandchildren?

GG: I have two grandchildren. I have four great-grandchildren.  
(Chuckles)

JP: They all living in the East Coast. Did they spread out?

GG: Well, yes, on the East Coast, Alabama to Maryland. Part of 'em are in Maryland and then my daughter and her family is all down in Alabama. With two great-grandchildren down there.

JP: Well, I think we're going to stop there.

GG: Okay.

JP: And Jerry, really appreciate your time and your service...

GG: Okay.

JP: ...with the association. Thank you.

GG: Okay.

(Conversation off-mike.)

JP: You have quite a few buttons on your shirt there. Can you explain it to us?

GG: Well, yes. I can explain. This is the national president's badge, which I had designed and made. This is one, another Pearl Harbor Survivors. This is one my local men had my VFW made, "Thanks to the A-bomb, I'm alive," which I think is very apropos, because if we had invaded Japan, and were a million Americans to have been killed and one of 'em might have been. And I have, somewhere I have a "Remember Pearl Harbor" pin, which I designed and had made, which I give away. And I think - did I give you one?

JP: No.

GG: Oh, by golly, here.

JP: I'd love to have one.

GG: Here's one for you.

JP: Thank you.

GG: And here's one for your...

(Taping interrupts then resumes.)

JP: Okay, Jerry, one more time, tell us about your pins.

GG: I have a Pearl Harbor president's badge, which I designed here and I gave one to each incoming president and I have one for the new incoming president. I have another one that I got up in Massachusetts. And of course my, "Thanks to the



A-bomb, I'm alive." My little "Remember Pearl Harbor" pin which I designed many years ago and had made and I've given away, I think, a couple thousand of mine at my expense. And it's been, just remember Pearl Harbor and keep America alert.

JP: Well, listen, good luck with your political career.

GG: Thank you.

JP: I hope mayor, that things are good for you in the future.  
Thank you.

GG: Thank you.

JP: You're welcome.

GG: I had the pleasure...

END OF INTERVIEW